THE SECULARIST:

A MONTHLY MAGAZINE.

'Every man *is* what he *knows*.'—BACON.

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EDITOR'S PREFACE.

LIKE all other things, *The Secularist* owes its existence to necessity.

It is to meet the demands of a large and rapidly-increasing class of anxious inquirers (not of the Birmingham school) that this effort is made. Wherever men think, the principles of Secularism are made the subject of urgent and conscientious investigation.

The very efforts made for the extinction of those principles; the affected scorn and contempt of fanatics; and the countless other difficulties which oppose the extermination of religion, are but serving for fuel to that great conflagration which is already smouldering in the foundations of Christianity and Company, and the increasing light of which will, ere long, show to the masses of the people the darkness of their ignorance and superstition, and the bright future of knowledge and liberty which lies before them.

In the eastern districts of London, the amount of interest exhibited in the struggle between superstition and reason, is perhaps unprecedented. Men, many men, are abandoning their old beliefs; casting behind them the cherished associations of childhood, home, parental teaching, friendship, and earnest labour, and enlisting in the ranks of unbelief; preferring the guidance of nature and truth, to the tortuous policy of priestcraft. Clergymen are redoubling their efforts to extend the influence of their various systems. Bible readers are growing angry, because poor men and women have the courage to shut the door in their impudent faces, and refuse their impertinent and intruded visits; Church and Dissent, those savage twin-cubs of modern Christianity, are making common cause against a common enemy, and, finding their cause failing, forget their manliness in their despair; catching at any weapon near at hand, they are not ashamed to use intimidation and false testimony, to prop, for a time, the rotten fabric of their falling temples.

Roman Catholicism is spreading in our midst. Persons tired of Protestant quackery and contradiction, seek refuge in the enforced unity of Romanism. And no wonder. Romanism is less dishonest and far more clever than Protestantism. We were going to say, more honest, but remembered that it is not wise to give credit for honesty to any rogue. They are both bad; Protestantism, the bastard child, being much the worse.

We see no refuge from either, but the entire repudiation of both, and all other, systems of superstition. And we think our 'mission' is to wage war against all these. Our warfare shall be as manly and noble as our knowledge will permit. We have no quarrel with *men*, although we shall not consider it unworthy the

chivalry of our cause, to give *men* the benefit of their own arrogance when (as they sometimes do) they thrust themselves into the place of the systems which they represent.

Our columns will be primarily devoted to the teachings of Secularist principles; but we shall give our opponents facility for the expression of their opinions.

Next in importance to the exhibition and enforcement of our principles, we shall regard the communication of intelligence of progress from all parts of the world.

We shall endeavour to possess our readers of the history of modern freethought, and the lives of leading men in that history.

We shall watch the course of the Christian world around us, for the instruction of our readers. Both clergy and laity will furnish abundant material.

We shall, from time to time, give our readers biographical sketches of the clergy and chief Christians; many of whose names are passages in church history, from the prominence of the part they have played. This will exhibit, we think, an important element in the influences which govern those of our fellowmen 'who name the name of Christ.'

Uttering all we know of 'whatsoever things are true, and whatsoever things are honest,' we hope to aid in the enlightenment, elevation, and happiness of all who are brought within the sphere of our influence. Our cause is not the cause of a man, nor of a faction; but the cause of humanity.

Ours is at once a mission of war and peace; for, while we advise all men to reject *the* Christ, we beseech every man to be to himself Christ, *i.e.*, peace.

THE CONDITION OF THE ENGLISH PEOPLE.

CHAPTER I.

PERHAPS no community exhibits so many and so wide social contrasts as our own. Living in our land of unequalled opulence, there are thousands of persons without the necessaries, and millions without the comforts of life; and in every large town and city of the empire, there exist an unknown number to whom, from the precariousness of their means, a frosty or a wet day is starvation.

The life of a very great part of our labouring population is only a lingering death.

At the door of the poor-house the poor man sometimes dies for want of bread; within sight of the hospital he often dies of very weakness and its attendant diseases.

In a land of churches and chapels, witnesses in courts of justice are refused as evidence, because they do not know there is a 'God.'

In a land of universities, schools, and educational institutions of every order, multitudes cannot write their own name, nor read it when written for them.

Notwithstanding our boasted virtue and morality, the chief objects of sight in our streets, are the police office and the gin 'palace.'

We send missionaries to the innocent aborigines of the South Sea, India, and America; but pass with cold scorn the pitiable heathen who are dying, physically and intellectually, at our doors.

The nation read 'Uncle Tom's Cabin,' and rose as one man weeping for the negro, and clamouring for his emancipation, while our prisons and our penitentiaries were crowded with criminality of every kind.

We pity the negro women, whose best nature is prostituted to meet the necessity and demand of a villanous traffic, while we heed not our countrywomen, born amongst us, endeared to us by every tie of blood, education, and affection, dragged to a lower degradation.

We pretend to spurn slave produce, because wrought by the blood of a fellowman, while we permit, unprotested, the existence of moral slavery at home, the worse from being voluntary and self-imposed, and remediable by our own resources.

The people of this country is a mighty infant, kept in perpetual pupilage; its limbs bound by swaddling cloths, at once splendid and obscene; its sight dazzled by false appearances; its hearing perplexed by uncertain sounds; its hands tied, that it may not wring justice from its oppressors, and achieve its own freedom. We live in the midst of great public and private shams.

Our tribunals, the vaunted abode of equity, are confused labyrinths, where an unpractised eye can detect nought but solemn mockery and intellectual gambling; where the real parties are never seen; where half the business needs the interference of imaginary persons for its

accomplishment. Our legislature is a brilliant falsehood. The so-called representatives of the people, represent themselves and not the people; the race is for power and peerages, and the 'battle is to the strong.'

Our religious meetings are the dullest of popular entertainments, wherein all call each other 'dearly beloved brethren,' while they do not care if their neighbour starves; where men confess themselves 'miserable sinners,' which they do not mean, and pray to be helped in the observance of laws which they neither understand nor intend to keep.

Our public men are notorious traffickers in principle.

A monster brewer, the most active demoraliser of the people, is allowed to take the lead in reformatory movements; taking the chair at a Bible, Missionary, or an Anti-slavery Society meeting, and the people willingly listen to the smooth cant and amiable hypocrisy of wealth; while, at a hundred houses bearing his name, men and women are spending money which should buy them and their children food and clothes, inflicting disease and immorality upon themselves, and all around; and, in their self-debasement, giving him that wealth which makes him so acceptable a patron to the reverend and respectable leaders in the religious and 'benevolent' world.

A foreign monarch, who has lately butchered thousands of his own subjects for a *coup d'état*, when he visits London receives universal homage, which he repays by contempt of English toadyism.

Let the idol have but enough gold, or (which suits better) brass to do the glittering part of the show, and our 'free and iudependent' will chant the chorus. Whether it be a Nicholas of Russia, a Feargus O'Connor, a Kossuth, a Napoleon, or a Mazzini, the English people will vent their foul praises in honour of any god who can last out nine days' wonder.

They permit public benefactors to languish and die in poverty and neglect, while they allow to be granted fabulous pensions to unknown and worthless individuals, whose only claim is their relation to some back-stairs diplomatist, or some sneaking M.P.

It is not long since, that to be the brother of a courtezan, was thought a qualification for the episcopal bench.

Are all these things exaggerations?

Are they not things of national experience, and every-day observation? And there can be no material improvement in the condition of the people until there is a thorough change of character, for condition must depend upon character.

While the people allow others to think for them; while they bow implicitly or indifferently to the teachings of political or religious quacks, and do not think for themselves, they must be content to remain as they are.

They must be content that their sons and brothers shall be sent wherever the government chooses, to fight, in the dark, and die for they know not what; nor must they repine if the national muscle and nerve are exerted only to fill the coffers of a hireling and selfish ministry—to have their dearest interests quibbled into a joke, and their very existence ignored by a place-hunting and time-serving parliament.

The secret cause of all these mischiefs is in the training of the popular mind, so far as that training may be said to exist. Men are diverted from the real pursuits of life.

They are directed to the tomb as the opener of reality, and made to believe that all else is unreal, and unworthy of thought. Immortality is placed before men as the Alpha and the Omega of all motives to action.

With all their deities, the people see the anomalies of their condition and character, still cry, 'Give us gods, to go before us.' They are tired of the parody and the goblin story, with which childhood is amused or frightened.

For this great chaos of popular rights, and popular morality, here is only one corrective—the abandonment of superstitious religions, and the acceptance of sound, practical rules of life.

In the pursuit of knowledge is the only legitimate employment of human mind, and in the possession and employment of knowledge, is to be found the only true salvation of the people of England in common with all humanity.

And the first step in the acquisition of true knowledge will be the first step to Materialism.

J. B. S.

THE *Times*, in alluding to Sir J. D. Paul, writes, 'Religion to such men is an advertising van, or a gaudy shop front, or a poetical effusion from Moses and Son. They trade upon the Bible as Barnum did upon the Fegee mermaid or the woolly horse.'

MARVELLOUSNESS, THE SOURCE OF RELIGION.

A Lecture, translated from the French of De-Broussais, and adapted by W. Lamster. Delivered in 1836, *in the University of Paris.*

MARVELLOUSNESS is the disposition to believe in marvels, in that which is out of the pale of natural law, in miracles, sorcery, ghosts, demons, witchcraft, fairies, goblins. You will find the favourite repast for this faculty in the 'Thousand and One Nights.' That work was composed under the influence of the organ of marvellousness; so were the lives of the Saints, in which we have legends containing accounts of numberless miracles, and which cost the reputation of their authors, in those times of ignorance and superstition, nothing, for who would have dared to give them the lie? But in these mysticity is joined to the marvellous, which is not the case in the tales borrowed from the Arabians, whence results more pleasure for readers in the perusal. The ancient mythology of the Greeks, itself founded upon the traditions brought from the East, presents some of the first recorded traces of the influence of this organ upon the intellectual system.

This faculty furnishes enjoyment in the extreme to its possessors. It is then a feeling, a sort of not-to-be-reasoned-with pleasure. In fact, there is no *reason* in the operation which leads man to represent extraordinary things, to admire them, to become enthusiastic, to fall into ecstacy, when he relates them or hears them related. There is another form of manifestation of the faculty, according to phrenologists. It is that of astonishment. If a man in whom this organ predominates meets you unexpectedly, he is astonished. He can think of nothing but of having met you. It is useless to relate to him the series of events by which you two came in contact. He remains occupied by the same subject. He is 'astonished that he should have met with you.' Every thing astonishes such persons. They laugh easily, and without a motive for gaiety. This I have verified. They admire and speculate with the same facility. This organ of marvellousness is a singular organ, but all its movements are signs of ignorance. When facts are not known they are represented at the pleasure of this faculty, and that gives a mental enjoyment which diverts the mind from *reflection* and *verification*—saves it the trouble of *thought*. One is attentive amid that sort of enjoyment which arises from astonishment, from surprise, from the observance of a beautiful spectacle, but we do not *reflect* on those occasions. There is the disposition. It is in nature. Illusion is its effect. When it predominates in the cerebral system, a man gives himself up easily to reverie. He builds 'Castles in Spain,' chimeras which he represents to himself as being real. He experiences all the sensations which result from the different visions that he creates by virtue of this faculty. He is then living in a sort of waking-dream. This organ predominates in our first years, and then reigns supremely. Nothing is so striking as the pleasure with which children lend themselves to all sorts of illusions, to fairy tales, ghost stories, and all the horrible things which are related to them by nurses and servants. But this organ may be depressed by the exercise of reason, and that should be done in early life. It is preserved, also, at an adult age, but much larger in women than in men. Unfortunately in this respect there are many female-men. Present to one of these men a chimera, and he will believe it to be real, he will give himself up wholly to the illusion, and the more extraordinary the invention, the more delighted will the auditor be. Thus you perceive here two elements: one is the agreeable, or the painful emotion, which is produced and sought to be prolonged by the representation, the recital, or the recollection of very remarkable and astonishing things; the other is the invention of those things by the imagination, or their representation other than they really are, from ignorance of the actual facts, and especially of causes.

The application of this disposition is found in the labours of the earliest apostles of different creeds, those creeds existing only by virtue of the marvellous. The second application of the organ is illustrated in the victims of religious ideas, in many lunatics, in all the illuminated people, who would not be so if the representation of things not natural had not rendered them so. In all the preachers of religion in whom this organ is deficient, it is absolutely necessary that they should draw upon their invention to supply the want of the marvellous, or their fame and success would remain below those of their brethren possessing the organ of marvellousness, and who knows

therefore, better how to turn their religion to account. You must all of you feel that a logician in a pulpit would cause no emotion. It would be the same thing with a naturalist, a mathematican, or any man who would support a religion by physical and mathematical proofs. He would become a laughing-stock, or at least he would provoke yawning and slumber; but he who presents a variety of extraordinary images and ideas as realities and truths, excites all sorts of passions, and is sought after by the public. But pay attention to this, that an astonishing spectacle, whether it is seductive from its beauty, or disgusting from its ugliness, would induce but momentary emotion if it were without life. It is always necessary also that the spectacle should be animated by the human passions, and the model is therefore necessarily taken either from man or from animals. Monsters are created by the different combinations of the elements of perception, and the passions of the hearers and the spectators are correspondingly excited. Thus this faculty calls to its aid all the others.

Another application of this organ is observed in comedians; they act on the same plan as the preachers; they also paint exaggerated passions—passions which they do not experience. In poets, especially epic and tragic, in musicians, who treat on supernatural subjects, called 'sacred,' who live by illusions, who pass their lives in the realisation of fantastic objects, the operation of this organ is most evident. It is not less so amongst architects, sculptors, and painters, whose continual occupation is to represent pretended supernatural ideas, and who, without expressing them by words, excite the emotions of them in their works, by the colour, the forms, the drawing of groups, &c., for this organ extends its influence over all the productions of the human faculties. Its influence is also exhibited in the apparatus of religion; in the decorations, the illustrations, the music, the singing, which take place in the edifices of those who employ these means to make proselytes, for *all* do not employ them. Protestants do not employ these means; they content themselves with the *morale*, while the Catholics bring into play all sorts of seductions, and, amongst others, means which are perfectly analogous with those of the opera, to keep up the fervency of their proselytes. Doubtless this comparison will not astonish you; Luther and Calvin made it before me. It is not in our day that they who compare the Catholic religion to the grand opera, can be hung or burnt. In the poets who have described what the senses have not been able to reach—in Milton, Tasso, and Dante—this organ acts with a powerful energy. Milton has described to us Paradise, the revolt of certain angels, and the fall of the first man, which he could not have done without the influence of this faculty. Tasso, the author of the 'Jerusalem Delivered,' gave way to ascetic ideas, which he drew from the same source. But Dante is remarkable for the association of destruction, armed with all its anger, ideality, and marvellousness; he devoted himself to painting Hell, and its torments; he refined upon sufferings and tortures more than any Inquisitor could have done. All these fictions are rendered with a terrible power of expression. Dante has put into operation, contemporaneously with the faculty of the marvellous, that of words, of metre, and the other theatrical faculties which are directed by a lively intellect; but an intellect seduced by mysteries of every kind, and especially by those of Catholicism.

In religion, this organ is also found in writings of another sect. Swedenborg dared to describe Paradise, the manner in which the angels and the archangels were grouped in heaven. This man imagined that he had a relationship with the spirits which are supposed to be intermediate between God and man, and has given an account of all his reveries in a voluminous work. Do not believe, that it is necessary to be imbecile or foolish to relish such works. There are organisations, perfectly reasonable in other respects, which are made for this. Berbiguier (who has written three volumes upon goblins), the marvellous romancers, and the author of a romance entitled 'The Monk,' also obeyed the suggestions of this organ. 'The Monk' is a *chef-d'œuvre* of invention and intellect, in which, with a tone of philosophy, and with amazing enthusiasm, the author causes to pass before your eyes the most extraordinary marvels in demonomania, abcession, magic, witchcraft, &c., and his work is, consequently, an astonishing association of reasoning and logic with the marvellous. The author of this romance is, in my opinion, an extraordinary man in this line, and has not been equalled. If you are not to be too much affected by details of *diablerie* and magic, read it. If you be too liable to feel their influence, read it not.

In the sciences themselves we also find the marvellous. Many *savants* prefer the marvellous, in their descriptions of nature, to demonstrations of her acts.

Although a medical man, I own that medical men are not exempt from the love of marvellous things; they personify natural diseases, the vital strength; they make occult powers; they multiply the natural powers, and they play upon them as things quite marvellous.

There are men, indeed, who say, 'Ah! do not withdraw me from my illusions!' They resemble the young man who, dreaming of his mistress, and of the pleasure he experienced in possessing her, awoke, perceived his error, and courted sleep again, in order that he might resume the illusion.

The predominance of this organ has also been observed in those women of fashionable life who prefer reading romances to history. And here I must make the remark—extremely important for its truth—that the reading of romances is extremely injurious to youth. Sometimes young men are advised to read romances under the excuse of forming their style. The pretext is delusive, for whilst engaged in forming a style—a false style—they acquire ideas of the world which are equally false—ideas of which they are cruelly disabused by experience. The suggestions of the organ of marvellousness are always deceptive.

The absence of this organ renders a man insensible to all the enjoyments which I have described. He attends to facts alone, and if he have not an irregular imagination, he goes directly to the reality, provided his intellectual organisation permits.

The auxiliaries of marvellousness are hope and ideality, or imagination. When these are associated with marvellousness, the combination is most deplorable. It constitutes such persons as gamblers, or men who devote all their time to contemplating of chimeras, to the neglect even of their own existence, and the lives of those persons who ought to be dearest to them in the world.

A great facility of elocution appears to me also to be a means of seducing a man to indulge in the marvellous, as I shall presently tell you when we come to the 'power-of-speech;' he who possesses, in an eminent degree, the talent of elocution, is delighted with the construction of his phrases, is in admiration of the beauty of his expressions, and is capable of speaking for along time without any meaning being attached to his words. Such men seduce themselves; they are their own victims. Music is also placed amongst the auxiliaries of marvellousness; for emotions result from it which are more agreeable than reflection. It must be confessed that the emotions caused by music are necessary to the rich idlers who know not what use to make of their time; thus operas and concerts are attended in a great measure by those indolent people who require to feel emotions. Italy furnishes numerous examples of this. Music (at least occasionally) rouses the people of that country from their state of apathy. It has exercised less influence over us since the French people have attended to their own interests, and even less still in England. Music always diverts a man from thinking. Music is also laid under contribution to express the sensations consequent upon marvellousness, and thus becomes the instrument of that faculty. Another auxiliary is found in veneration. Veneration is not *always* joined to marvellousness, for there is no *law* for the association of organs. You cannot conclude from the predominance of one organ, that another is or is not much developed. Nature determines to disconcert those who would pretend to found systems on this sort of association; and this discordance, while it furnishes objections to our adversaries, serves to justify us, because every sort of combination is possible. Veneration being joined to marvellousness, gives force to the latter, and produces adoration. Veneration alone would not produce adoration. A deeper feeling is represented by the expression 'adoration'—a feeling which the word 'veneration' does not convey, and as the term 'adoration' exists in all languages, we cannot deny the existence of the feeling which it represents. You see that I here agree with the Scotch system of philosophy, and the reason is because I seek only after truth. Well, I say that adoration is something more than a result of either marvellousness or veneration. Taken alone, it appears to me—mind, I do not offer myself as an unimpeachable authority; far from it; I am too much disposed to tremble at the feebleness of human intellect—it appears to me that adoration is compounded of veneration and marvellousness.

Amongst the opposing faculties, we must place, a very important circumspection, of which I spoke at great length a

few days since. Circumspection tends to arrest all the ideas, all emissions of our thoughts, all manifestation of the feelings. It restrains them, and turns them over, as it were, in the interior of the head (I here make use of figurative language, for there are various movements to which belong the phenomena which ought to be retained in the brain), it makes them rest awhile beneath the eyes of intelligence (another figure) in order that this faculty may have time to determine how it shall employ them. Circumspection, then, is a very powerful faculty. I have eulogised it greatly, although I do not myself possess it in a predominant degree, but I possess enough of it, I belive, to be able, with a great deal of observation, to appreciate its importance, and feel in a great measure what it is worth, and the advantages or disadvantages which are attached to its development. Well, then, circumspection is the opponent, the corrector, as much as it can be, of marvellousness. However, circumspection may itself be subjugated by marvellousness, even without the latter predominating. A man weighs all the motives which he has for giving forth his ideas on the marvellous, and if he believes that he has sufficient authority for venting them, he makes them public.

Having judged from all this what are the functions of the organ of marvellousness, I will now submit to you some reflections upon the various questions which it presents. Marvellousness is the source of numerous enjoyments, to which every thing is sacrificed at an early age, but which gradually diminish with time, and are ultimately destroyed by the experience of real life. Experience puts an end to these illusions. It is also a fact, that the study and observation of nature are by far the best correctives for this disposition to illusion. The reason of this is simple enough. All other marvels fall before the great marvel of nature, for the lesser marvels, the offspring of cracked-brains, are false and miserable copies of some of the facts of nature—pitiful exaggerations, and ridiculous disfigurements of the immense facts of natural history. So that if you can succeed in simply raising a small portion of the veil which covers this great picture, all fictions will sink before the contemplation of nature. Ignorance being our native state, on which profound silence has been preserved, over which a curtain has been drawn by the psychologists and the metaphysicians—ignorance, I say, being the native state of man, must necessarily prevail among the masses, because there are no means of profoundly instructing the masses. What has happened from such a natural order of things? Why, that superior men, those who, better organised than the others, have found themselves instructed the first, have been the first to undertake to civilise the masses, addressing themselves for that purpose to the predominating instincts and feelings. What would you have had them do? Could they address themselves to the million through the medium of knowledge? None existed in the savage state. Knowledge is the result of an apprenticeship to Fact, a hard and painful master. Facts do not, at first, appear to offer much interest to the observer. I have the honour to address many persons who have applied themselves exclusively to the study of facts. Well, all appeared to you uninteresting, dry, and inchorent, at first; but time and reflection soon enabled you to perceive the relationship between the facts first learned and those which followed; and the moment you detected this relationship, you experienced a real affection for facts, and placed them above chimeras; but it cost you a great deal to do that, for we are all educated in illusion. Well, the vulgar remain all their lives in the same state of illusion which enveloped us before we had observed and studied, and give loose to those feelings which seduce men; and, amongst all the feelings, there are none stronger than the imagination. What would you have had legislators do under these circumstances? They found themselves on every side overwhelmed by the inclinations which lead the multitude. They have been obliged, in order to govern men, to assemble them, to unite them in society, to address themselves to the inclinations which rule them. How have they worked to effect this? They have made use of two groups of organs, which you now understand very well, namely, the lateral organs, the organs of egotism, and the organs of veneration and marvellousness. They said to men, here are the means to satisfy your first wants; unite together to enjoy them, and to ensure to yourselves a continuation of them. Then remarking that these men were credulous, disposed to the marvellous, they added, 'There are above, supreme powers, which will destroy you if you fail to do what we prescribe. The Gods are good, but they are just: they

must be obeyed.' And as every man possesses more or less the sentiment of justice, the legislators were comprehended, and society began to organise itself.

Thus, all civilisation has commenced by these two points—first, by obtaining what is requisite for food, for shelter, and to satisfy the demands of the posterior and lateral organs; then, by impressing men with a respect, and even a fear, of a Superior vengeance, if the laws which have been imposed are infringed; therefore you find, in the commencement of the histories of all nations, nothing but wars; that is to say, wars of creeds, founded upon marvellousness and veneration. Afterwards, when, by degrees, tranquil life and abundance succeeded to this violent state of things, the sciences were cultivated; *their* turn came, and truth began to make itself known. Science necessarily makes slow progress, because great length of time is required to improve it, whilst none is necessary to bring forth all the passions and feelings, but periods of rigour for the development of the body: that is a grand fact. The passions require only the development of the body, but science requires long years of sustained, enormous, and often forced study. Yes, *forced*; for if you did not force youth to intellectual labour, it would be led away by those feelings which cause it the liveliest emotions, and the intellect would remain at the disposition of the passions.

We are living in a very remarkable period; the time of science has arrived; the time of illusions is passing away, though slowly, because science cannot penetrate the masses, and there are so many speculating men who seek to profit by the disposition of the masses to credulity. Nay, even amongst those men who are instructed, there is a great number who affect credulity, though they do not feel it.

THE AUTOBIOGRAPHY OF A DISSENTING MINISTER.

CHAPTER I.

Concerning the time and place of my birth, I shall not be particular, and indeed I shall in the following narrative studiously omit all mention of such matters as may afford the means of mere personalities. I have a higher object in view than that of gratifying a vain curiosity, for my aim in the following pages will be rather to set forth the evils of a system than to cast reproach upon any individuals. Some matters I must disguise, and most I shall rather soften than exaggerate. I am not going to make a fiction that shall look like truth, but rather to exhibit a truth which shall look like a fiction. By many, indeed, it will be treated as fiction; for they who *do not* know it to be true will think it fiction, and they who *do* know it to be true will call it fiction.

I am the youngest of five, and my father, at the time of my birth, and for many years after, was a linen-draper in the borough of Southwark. He had been brought up a strict dissenter, and was as pleased to trace his descent from the non-conformists of the days of Charles II. as any Welshman can be to trace his pedigree up to Noah's ark. My mother also was a puritan by descent, and all their friends and acquaintances were more or less of the same class. I was imbued from my earliest childhood with the idea that nothing good could exist out of the pale of dissent. None but the books of our own sect were ever admitted into our house, and as much as possible, all care was taken that we should not hold intercourse with the people of the world; for so we designated all who did not belong to our sect. Sometimes, indeed, it was absolutely necessary to meet with individuals belonging to the established church, but on such occasions, I observed, that so little conversation passed, that we seemed to be in the company of foreigners, who could not speak our language. As for going into a church we should as soon have thought of going into a play-house, which building we were taught to regard as the house of the devil. We did not indeed call the church by the same name, but we regarded it with almost the same abhorrence, and we used to speak of a church parson as of one who had no religion, morals, or even understanding. Being of a rather ardent temperament, I entered into the spirit of our family religion with no slight degree of zeal, and I regret to say, that the religion of my early youth, which was particularly commended by the pastor of the flock to which my father and mother belonged, consisted for the most part of a very pharisaic contempt for others. I used to make very many severe remarks on the irreligion of the world in general, and of our own more immediate neighbours in particular. I recollect very distinctly the indignation with which on Sunday I was in the habit of declaiming against the sin of Sabbath-breaking, when

I saw persons setting out in gigs or on horseback on country excursions; and if I read in the newspapers any account of persons being drowned in the river on Sunday, I felt rather more delight in this manifestation of a divine judgment, than rightly became a Christian and a youth. I was invariably attentive to the discourses of our pastor, but I rather think, upon recollection, that I listened to them so closely, prompted more by the vanity of being afterwards able to repeat the heads of the sermons, than by any truly serious feeling, or any desire after religious instruction.

When I was little more than ten years old, I was sent to a school about six miles from home, the principal recommendation of which school was that the master was a strict dissenter. I had been taught at home to think a little too highly of myself, both as to my acquirements, and my abilities, therefore I thought that I had little else to do at school than merely to walk over the course. My master also contributed not a little to feed my vanity, by a letter which he wrote to my father after I had been at school scarcely five months:—for in this letter, which inclosed the bill for my first half-year's schooling, the conductor of the establishment, as he was pleased to call himself, said that in all his experience as a teacher of youth, he had never met with a young gentleman of such decided talents as myself. As we are always pleased with those who agree with us in opinion, and as we think them, in consequence of that agreement, very sensible people, I was of course as well satisfied with my master, as he was with me. My father and mother also commended the penetration, and approved the judgment of my instructor. I afterwards, however, found out, somewhat to my humiliation, that the same commendation which had been lavished on me, had been with equal liberality bestowed on every pupil in the school; but I endeavoured to console myself with the thought, that if it could be true only of one, it might happen that I was that one. I remained at that school for five years, and by means of my extraordinary and decided abilities, I managed to make the following acquirements. In arithmetic I had proceeded as far as tare and trett; in Latin I had mastered Cæsar and Virgil by the help of Duncan, and some of the Odes of Horace by the help of Smart; in Greek I did not shine, perhaps my genius was not fitted for that particular line of study, but my master was kindly and flatteringly pleased to say, that I knew as much as he could teach me; I had learned the greatest part of the Greek grammar, and I could construe the first chapter of the Gospel according to St. John. In addition to all this, I had been taught geography, mapping, drawing, the use of the globes; together with a little chemistry, hydraulics, astronomy, botany, geology, conchology, universal history, and moral philosophy. In a word, I was well qualified to take a place behind my father's counter, for which I was originally destined.

My sectarian zeal had not been at all abated, but rather increased while I was at school, and my vanity also was cultivated at the same time, for we thought ourselves much better taught than the pupils of the old-fashioned public schools, where nothing was attended to but Greek and Latin, whereas we had the advantage of a scientific education, and knew something of what was passing in the world around us. We did not write Latin verses, but we learned something better, for we learned to ridicule those who did; and when we had demonstrated that Latin verses were of no use in the pulpit, at the bar, in the senate, or behind the counter, we thought that we had completely exploded them, and that all those who paid attention to them in the course of instruction, were less wise than ourselves. The education which I had received gave me a taste for reading, but unfortunately the facility with which I had received it, gave me a distaste for exertion and much labour. On leaving school, I had calculated upon perpetual holiday; but when I was placed behind my father's counter, I found my situation quite the reverse of a holyday. Every day and every hour my taste became more and more decided in preferring a contemplative, to an active life. I was altogether the best educated of the family—my father knew nothing either of Greek or Latin; my elder brother knew a little of Latin, but not a syllable of Greek; and my three sisters had but a slight acquaintance with French. Feeling, therefore, my intellectual superiority, I became less and less at ease, in a situation that might be filled by a most uneducated person. Under this impression I grew extremely uneasy in my mind; I was absolutely disgusted with the sordidness of business, and longed most ardently for a liberal profession. Just at this juncture it happened that a

new shop in our line was opened in our immediate neighbourhood. This gave my father some great concern, for he was unable to cope with this new rival. For myself, however, it was, as I considered at the time, a fortunate event, for it forwarded my views of adopting a liberal profession.

A friend of mine had lent me to read the 'Life and Remains of Henry Kirke White,' of Nottingham. I perused the book with the utmost avidity, and sympathised most deeply with his dislike of business. I could not help thinking that there was a remarkable similarity in our respective lots, and I felt that I was destined for something better than the sordid pursuits of trade. The only profession that was open to me was the Christian ministry. This suited at once my own taste and my father's means; for, by the falling off of his business, he had less need of my assistance in the shop, and by the interest of the minister at whose chapel our family attended, he could easily procure my admission into one of those academies, seminaries, or colleges, in which young men of serious habits and presumed talent, are gratuitously educated for the Christian ministry among Protestant dissenters.

There are various dissenting colleges in different parts of the kingdom, and they possess a considerable diversity of character, some of them being more learned and classical than others. Some of them pretend to give as complete an education as either of the English universities, and others, considering that their object is rather to raise up Christian teachers who shall instruct, than to send forth scholars who shall astonish the world, are more intent on theological reading, and on exercising the gifts and graces of pious eloquence, than on leading their students through a course of classical and mathematical study: not that in these less learned colleges the classics and mathematics are altogether neglected, only they are not pursued so decidedly, and so deeply as in the more learned institutions. It was my lot to be placed in one of the more learned of these colleges, where not only were the students instructed in classical literature, but where it was necessary that all who sought for admission should undergo a previous examination. I think, if I recollect rightly, the standard of admissibility into this college was that the candidate should be able to read Horace, and that he should have made some progress in Greek grammar. I believe there was no objection to Smart's Horace. This strict classical examination was not always required even in this learned academy, as I afterwards found; for there were sometimes instances of persons at the age of four or five and twenty, who had left school for ten years or more, and who, when at school, had not been very profoundly instructed, having felt a strong inclination to adopt the ministerial profession, were admitted into this more learned seminary, under the impression that their advanced age would induce them to apply with the greater diligence to the studies required by their situation.

As it was necessary, however, for young candidates like myself to undergo a previous examination, I was, with all due ceremony, summoned to attend on a certain day at the house of my pastor, who was to make such inquiry concerning my literary acquirements as might enable him to report me eligible. I must confess, that notwithstanding all the conceit with which I had hitherto regarded my scholarship, I felt in some small degree, to say the least of it, a certain trepidation lest I might fail in the ordeal that I was about to undergo. I knew that it was a rule that, except in peculiar circumstances as above named, it was essential that all admitted into this learned institution, should be able to read Horace; of course therefore I took it for granted that I must be examined in Horace, but the question was, whether my examiner would choose to select passages for me to read, or whether I might be permitted to select for myself. I had at school only learned the first book of the Odes, and the Art of Poetry, and I trusted that I might be able to make out something of them, if I were required; but I very much feared that all the rest of the book would be almost as untranslatable as so much Chinese, and it was quite impossible for me, even by the help of the incomparable Smart, to prepare myself for a promiscuous and random examination. Then again I was in much doubt and fear as to the metres and the prosody—we had not attended at all to those matters when I was at school, for my master knew nothing of versification, except that it was of no use, which he proved very much to the satisfaction of all his pupils: but as I was going to be examined previously to an admission into a learned establishment, I did not know but that some knowledge of the Horatian metres might be required of me. I, there-

fore, a few days before the time appointed for my examination, procured an edition of Horace which contained some account of the metres, but I found to my great dismay, that the treatise on the metres was written in a very difficult sort of Latin, which I could by no means make out, nor could I make head or tail of the different systems of verse which were there set down. I closed the book in despair, and I became more and more convinced that my schoolmaster was decidedly right in determining that metres were of no use.

The day for my examination arrived, and I went with a swelling, but trembling heart, to my pastor's house to drink tea, with Smart's Horace in one pocket, and a Greek grammar in the other. In my eagerness and haste not to be too late, I was a little before my time, and I was shown into the study, where I found myself with no other company than the books. Curious enough it was, that among the books which were lying on the table, I should find Smart's Horace and Duncan's Virgil. I was delighted to discover this similarity of classical taste between my pastor and myself. The sight of these books was indeed delightful to me—though at the moment I was not aware of the fulness of the relief that they promised me. I afterwards discovered, and I record it here lest I should forget the fact, that this reverend gentleman, who was appointed to be my examiner, was as much afraid of me, as I was of him; he was apprehensive that, if he set me to construe an ode of Horace, and I should be unable to construe it, he should be as unable to set me right; for he, like many others, as I have since ascertained, possessed the reputation of much greater erudition than had really fallen to his lot. When he came into the study, I took a great deal of pains to look as if I had not been looking upon the table, and I think I succeeded. We went into another room to tea, and after tea the important work of examination commenced. I trembled a little, but not so much as I should have done, if I had not seen Smart's Horace and Duncan's Virgil on the table in the next room.

I think I can remember the examination almost word for word; therefore, with the reader's leave, I will set it down as it occurred. My pastor was the first to speak, and he began by saying in a very pleasant voice:—'So, young gentleman, I find that you are desirous of undertaking the office of the ministry, and for this purpose you are a candidate for admission into —— College. I suppose you are aware that the directors of that institution, being sensible of the great importance of a learned ministry, make a point of requiring all young men who seek to be admitted there, to undergo a previous examination as to their classical attainments.'

It was well for me that I had seen Smart's Horace and Duncan's Virgil in the next room, or I should certainly have betrayed symptoms of great agitation. As it was, however, I replied with much self-possession—'I am perfectly aware of it, sir.'

In all affairs of this kind, there is nothing like putting a good face on the matter. I was, indeed, astonished at my own boldness; but I found that it answered. My examiner, without hesitation, replied smilingly—'In your case, of course, the examination must be a mere matter of form, for considering the high reputation of the school at which you received your education, and the excellent character which you sustained there, no doubt can exist as to your competency, only I must be able to say that I have had proof of your classical knowledge. Now the directors of this college, in order to fix the standard of proficiency high enough, require that a young man, before he is admitted, be able to construe Horace.'

I was just on the point of taking Smart's Horace from my pocket, but my pastor, hastily rising up, said, 'I will fetch a Horace out of the next room, and perhaps you will be kind enough to do me the favour to construe a line or two.'

He was soon back again, bringing with him, not Smart's Horace, but the Delphin Horace, and presenting it to me open at the first ode of the first book, he said—'Read where you please.'

I accordingly began, and very boldly proceeded with the first ode, construing it with as much accuracy and elegance as I could. I had not gone very far, when my examiner graciously and kindly interrupted me, saying—'That will do, sir, perfectly well! admirably well! You not only construe Horace, but you enter into the spirit of your author. I shall have great pleasure in making a favourable report of your scholarship.' Then after a moment's silence, and a little hesitation, the gentleman proceeded—'Pray, sir, at your school did you learn the metres?'

I felt rather uneasy at this question; but having got through the construing with so much *éclat*, I was emboldened, and fearlessly replied, 'Mr. —— did not think metres of much use.'

At this reply of mine, I thought at the time, and I have had greater reason to think so since, my examiner felt somewhat relieved, and he replied with great alacrity:—'I am quite of his opinion; and I believe that at the college where you are going, the same opinion is entertained. Some pedantic individuals have occasionally endeavoured to introduce into our seminaries of learning an attention to these trifles, but good sound sense has got the better of the pedants. Indeed, sir, what can we know of the Latin quantity? We know not how the Romans pronounced their prose, and we are much less likely to know how they pronounced their poetry.' Thereupon the examiner smiled, and I smiled, and the Delphin Horace was laid upon the table, and our conversation flew off to other topics, and I found that I had passed my examination most triumphantly, and that the learned college was anticipating a valuable addition to its literary reputation in my learned person.

TIME.

TIME is flying, flying, flying,
Oh, how swiftly by!
Like a waterfall that's rushing,
Or a fountain ever gushing—
Hourly, daily, weekly, yearly,
Rapid as the lightning, nearly,
Do the moments fly.

Catch the *seconds* as they're passing,
Wait not for the *hours;*
Prize them as a golden treasure—
Use them not in trifling pleasure—
Seconds, minutes—prizing, holding
As you would those buds unfolding
Into choicest flowers.

And for some important purpose,
Not with selfish zeal;
See—humanity is bleeding,
Aid—thy fellow-man is needing. [them,
Hundreds, thousands, millions—hear
Breathing out their woes—go, cheer
Seek their wounds to heal. [them,

Soon another year, all freighted
With the deeds of man,
Will be borne away for ever,
And recall'd by mortal never!
Oh, be wakeful, watchful, ready,
Heart and hand, to bless the needy,
Thus fill out thy span.

SKETCH IN THE OLD BAILEY.

COURT.—'Girl, have you any witness to call in your defence?'

PRISONER.—'No, your Lordship; I haven't a friend upon the face of the earth.'

MEET epitaph for such as thou,
With wasted frame and drooping brow!
On whom this instant every eye
Rains scorn's condensed artillery—
The clown's coarse laugh—the ribald's leer—
The juror's state-affecting sneer—
Th' official's shrug—the counsel's smile
(Nibbling his idle pen the while)—
The judge's sly but solemn pun—
Have all not gall'd thee, guilty One?
Thou common mark for shafted mirth—
Thou wretch, without a friend on earth!

What's writ is writ—Thou'st heard thy doom—
Depart, and give fresh felons room;
Hence! thy allotted time to dwell
With those who made their bed in hell,
Beneath thy fierce taskmaster grim,
To toil with trembling weary limb—
The long laborious day to curse,
Yet dread night's sleepless fever worse—
To chafe and fret till thou attain
Thy haunts of gin and guilt again;
Leper! from every human hearth
Cast out, without a friend on earth!
Thou'rt gone:—but yonder greedy gate
Again shall lead thee to thy fate—
Amid thy co-mates' ruffian din
Once more to shiver and to sin;
Through London's midnight streets again
To plash in winter's killing rain;
Stifling that dread sepulchral cough
That soon or late must cut thee off—
Must give thee huddled to thy shell
From some foul garret's fetid cell,
A home within the grave-yard's girth
At last, thou friendless on the earth!

No stoic I:—of crime and care
I've had my birthright's ample share;
Yet sooner than possess his heart
Who, with the fiend's consummate art,
First lured thee from thy father's cot
(Perchance in some green shelter'd spot)
And led and left thee, till despair
Produced thee bound, a felon there—
Sooner—though bribed by jewelled power—
Than risk his deathbed's damning hour,
I'd toil for bread—in misery's dearth—
Through life, without a friend on earth!

To Our Readers.

We have received a letter from Mr. A. C. Cudden, requesting co-operation in the formation of a society having for its object 'the elucidation of the means whereby the science of Society may be developed and perfected.' Unless Mr. Cudden can declare a religious or unreligious ground of action, we cannot understand how we, or others, can join his society. We are of opinion that nothing short of the entire abandonment of all religions can be taken as the basis of a useful, energetic, and general effort for the elevation of the people.

We are compelled to omit the 'Letter to Lord Stanley on Popular Education,' for want of space. It will appear next month.

Communications for the Editor to be addressed 17A, *Jubilee Street, Mile End, London, by the* 20*th of each month.*

The Secularist.

FRAGMENTARY REMARKS UPON THE BIBLE.

I.

[*To the Editor of the 'Secularist.'*]

BEFORE proceeding with the subject, permit me to make a few introductory remarks; for methinks I hear some intelligent reader, upon seeing the above heading, exclaim: 'Another attack on the Bible! Dear me, these people never seem to get tired of discussing this antiquated and worn-out subject. What *new* argument can any one advance either for, or against it; has not the matter been sifted and scrutinised *pro* and *con*, for the last century or more, by men of the highest intellect and most brilliant abilities, and what can such a pigmy as you do, either to advance or retard its interest?' Stop! stop! my intelligent friend, do not hurry on so fast, you will get out of breath. Just permit me to put in a word or two edgeways, and you shall have an explanation. I know as well as you, that great, good, and intelligent men have searched the Scriptures, and have favoured the world with their verdict upon the matter; but of what advantage is that to me? If other men have satisfied their minds upon the subject, so much the better for them; but it does by no means follow that because some men have expressed their satisfaction, that their opinion should satisfy me. No! I must examine for myself, in order to satisfy my own mind. Supposing John Selden did speak exaltingly of the Book, and Lord Bacon did praise its excellences, and the immortal Milton did declare the songs of Zion, and the orations of the prophets, to be incomparable for beauty and profundity of thought; and supposing Robert Boyle, John Locke, Sir William Jones, and a host of others, did join in these praises; what then? These men, though unquestionably great in other branches of learning, *may possibly* have been indifferent thinkers and mere babies in this particular. Nay, the very fact of their being great in other branches of science, argues very forcibly in my favour, for they can never have devoted much of their time to the investigation of a subject so various and diversified in all its ramifications. Moreover, like myself they were, after all, only fallible men, subject to error; and inasmuch as none of these men will consent to take my place at the bar of God, before whom we are told we must all one day stand; and as it will devolve upon me to answer for myself, I will not take a question upon which so much depends, for granted, upon the *ipse dixit* of any other man, however great his intellect, or profound his abilities. I hold it to be the imperative duty of every one, not to depend upon what others may think or say, but to search and examine the Scriptures for himself, and to remember the passage in Job, and to say with him, 'Great men are not *always* wise, neither do the learned understand judgment; therefore will I also show you my opinion.'

I have of late discarded all controversial reading upon this subject, so that I may not be biassed in my judgment thereon. I am determined to use the capacity with which I am endowed, to 'prove all things,' and to 'hold fast that which is good.'

I conceive the subject to be of the highest importance. Our temporal and eternal welfare is involved in the question. If the Bible is in reality that which it pretends to be, then, I say, woe unto those who refuse to accept it—if it be not, the sooner its fallacies are exposed, the better for the welfare of humanity. These, then, are some of the reasons why I intend troubling your readers with a few remarks on the Bible. I shall endeavour to make

them as original as my humble capacities will permit. I shall endeavour to point out, what appear to me to be weighty reasons, why I reject the Bible as the word of God, and why I am unable to acknowledge, as the Creator of the universe, the character portrayed as such in the Bible.

I have no doubt, the pages of the *Secularist* will be open to adverse opinions, and I shall only be too happy to submit what I may have to say upon the subject, to the most unsparing and scrutinising criticism. Truth will bear the most fiery ordeal of free discussion; and, like gold, it will but come out the purer for the fiercer fire.

With your kind permission, then, I shall commence my remarks in the next number; and, concluding for the present, I have only to add my hearty wish for the success of your paper. May it prove a welcome visitor in the home of every intelligent working man; may its aim be their instruction and elevation, and may its tendency lead to the advancement of their physical comfort and their mental happiness. ELIAS GOTTHEIL.

REMARKS ON LIBERALITY AND BIGOTRY.

LIBERALITY is a feeling of benevolence towards our fellow-creatures. We speak as favourably of them as possible, and endeavour to think of them charitably. All this is consistent with correctness of judgment, with independence, and with the exercise of justice. For if, in any case, we conceive a man to be worthy and honest, who is evidently unprincipled, we are not liberal, but credulous. There are two ways in which human merit may be estimated; by comparing one person with another, and by judging the conduct of men with reference to human laws and customs. If we discover that some men are worse than we are, let us pity rather than despise them. Let us not encourage hatred and revenge, otherwise we shall show that, although our fellow-creatures have deviated from the path of propriety, we have made ourselves equally faulty by fostering these hateful dispositions. Is it reasonable that the opposition to evil should be maintained by evil? And yet it is too frequently the case. This, however, would seem to show that the object of the complainant, in many instances, is not so much an interest for the welfare of others, as an inclination to hunt after impropriety for the sake of gratifying censoriousness.

In the pursuit of philosophy, truth should be the principal object—not envy, or ambition. In political matters, patriotism should be the guide—not party spirit, or rancorous opposition: peace on earth, 'to do good,' ought to be your religion. In the pursuit of our daily avocations we should be neither unfair nor monopolising; but we should endeavour to procure a comfortable maintenance, and allow others to do the same. If we practise these things we shall be liberal; if not, we shall merit the character of selfish and bigoted persons.

When the low principle of private interest influences the actions of a man, he is usually displeased with his own possessions, and he generally envies the advantages of others. Dr. Jeremy Taylor observes of this envious disposition:—'It eats the flesh, and drics up the marrow, and makes hollow eyes, lean cheeks, and a pale face;' but a liberal feeling produces contentment, good health, and cheerfulness. A bigoted man will be obstinately attached to his own system, and he will be prejudiced against the opinions of others. Bigotry occasions stiffness, obstinacy, uncharitableness, falsehood, malice, and cruelty. With such a train of evils, is it not natural that every one should condemn it? But a man will sometimes reject it in his theory, while he will support it in his practice. No person countenances bigotry in an opponent; and yet, in the violent exclamations against the belief and conduct of others, he may exhibit the effects of bigotry in himself. It is as if every one hated a grey eye, or a black eye, and yet most men possessed it: but as every person could only behold the defect of another, so he would ridicule what he saw, without considering that he himself possessed a similar blemish.

Ill will and harshness arise from a discord of opinion.

'Tis with our judgment as our watches; none
Go just alike, yet each believes his own.'

However, we should consider, and remember that variation is unavoidable; and this should occasion a feeling of liberality. If one man differs from another, and thinks himself justifiable in so doing, why should he condemn another for differing from him? The strongest degree of confidence is no proof of our correct-

ness; for many have been extremely positive, and greatly mistaken. Locke observes:—'Crooked things are stiff and inflexible as straight, and men may be as positive in error as in truth.' Obstinacy implies a stiff and unreasonable maintaining of an opinion; prejudice is a premature, or hasty conclusion, on a disputable matter. Both may proceed from a bad heart, but they frequently arise from ignorance. Some men are habitual bigots and persecutors; and if they had not one subject on which they might gratify their spleen, they would find another. Recaredus, a king of the Visigoths, in the sixth century, was an opposer of Christianity; but when it was proved to him that the establishment of its doctrines would consolidate his power (and the spiritual power of the priesthood at that early period was of no mean character), he feigned belief in the then orthodox faith, and he forthwith persecuted the Jews unrelentingly. The object, and not the disposition, was changed. Persons of this kind profess a love of virtue; but their minds are so much perverted, that innocence and excellence are made the principal objects of disapproval. They dislike virtue, because it gives them no food for their depraved appetite of scandal, and they detest merit, because it eclipses their own twinkling lustre. A citizen of Athens, who had voted for the banishment of Aristides, confessed that he had done so because of the high character which that worthy man had obtained in the city. A feeling of rivalry, or envy, has sometimes grown up from emulation; the latter is praiseworthy, but the former is highly injurious. Nothing gives a more favourable opinion of a man's candour and temper, than to live on good terms with those whom he considers as antagonists in his career and opinion. We are required by every principle of justice, of reason, and truth, to discountenance the influence of ill will and jealousy. Why approve a thing because we happen to possess it? and undervalue it because it is possessed by another? We must exert ourselves for the purpose of acquiring learning, independence, and honour; but we must act justly and liberally.

If we look into the history of the world, we shall discover both the prevalence and unreasonableness of bigotry. This fiendish principle, or sentiment, like an ill-omened bird, has spread its wings, and fluttered about in the night. In Europe, during the ignorance of the dark ages, bigotry burst forth in a lurid flame, making the darkness of that period visible. But on every occasion, as the light of knowledge advances, this imp of darkness is eclipsed by truth.

In philosophy, prejudice and bigotry—these accursed plague-spots to humanity—these drags on human progress, cruelly persecuted the eminent Galileo. When this learned and ingenious man was nearly seventy years of age, and was worthy to have been crowned with laurels for his astronomical discoveries, he was obliged, on his bended knees, in the presence of a junta of Christian cardinals, to deny the truth of his opinions; otherwise he would have been tortured, and burnt as a heretic. Error, vice, and ambition make men dread the least glimmer of truth, lest its rays, shining into one window of their dark, superstitious building, should discover the odiousness and defilement of the whole. Any change, therefore, however important or trivial, is immediately suppressed. In almost every age we find some disgraceful example of the tyranny of ignorance over knowledge. Anaxagoras maintained that the sun was a globe, and his countrymen condemned him to die, but the philosopher avoided this cruel sentence by flight; Socrates drank the hemlock unmoved; Harvey, the discoverer of the circulation of the blood, was called a fool and a madman; Jenner was denounced from many a pulpit as a blasphemer. 'Truth is often an unwelcome guest, but she will not be tampered with. No subterfuge is tolerated by her. With uncompromising hand she strips error of its night-woven mantle, and reveals all its deformities to the naked eye. Hence she is hated. Error sometimes lives through ages, but its death is eventually certain. As the sun is the heavens-giving light and life to this terrestrial sphere, truth can never die. Shackle it, if you will; let the dungeon be its portion, and the rack its reward, you cannot put out its vestal fire. Bigotry and ignorance have often tried to do so, but have always failed. They have retarded its rays to reach us, till they have deluded themselves into the belief that they were succeeding, but lo! in a moment when it was least expected, heavenward hath leaped the sacred flame, with brilliancy increased a thousand fold.'

Bigotry being a religious sentiment, religion has served as an occasion for its most violent persecution. One reason is,

that its principles and doctrines are important, and it is a prevailing opinion that a certain creed is essential to salvation. Truth, then, or error, will be the introduction of life or death. If error be propagated it will occasion (as those zealous contenders for forms and ceremonies suppose) the everlasting death of thousands, who would otherwise have been saved. It is no wonder, therefore, that opposition, jealousy, prejudice, and persecutions should arise. Liberality does not approve them, and they can only be the result of contracted views of things, and reason shows that they are incorrect. A persecuting spirit is always a bad one. Malice and cruelty, in employing their fiendish arts, never succeed. If the principle of opposition be not so powerful as to crush immediately the object of its hatred, the effort will be useless; for oppression will call forth investigation: and there is generally so much honour and good feeling in the masses of mankind, that they will support the cause of the injured party. If any system be painted in odious colours, many persons will hate it; but when a stir arises, people will examine into its merits; and if they find it has been misrepresented, and that the believers in it act nobly, they will break through all control, and embrace what they had formerly despised. Thus a persecuted people has generally become a thriving people, and when the check is removed, multitudes who had been undecided—who had been convinced of the truth of the doctrine, but had been timid of a public profession—come forward simultaneously, and, like a bursting forth of a mighty torrent, they carry everything before them.

A persecuting spirit on account of religion has arisen among the Jews, Mahometans, Heathens, Roman Catholics, and, not the least, among the Protestants. Aberbanel, a bigoted Jew, declared that the grace of God did not extend beyond the river Jordan, and that all the countries eastward were not only without the favour of heaven, but that the inhabitants were unworthy of the regard of the Jews, because they were followers of another religion. Barcochebas condemned all persons to a cruel death who would not deny Jesus Christ. On the other hand, the Jews have been persecuted by Heathens, Mahometans, Roman Catholics, and Protestants. There always are, in every age, some bloody-minded men—

'Who think through unbelievers' blood
Lies their directest path to heaven.'

At an assembly of States in the sixteenth century, John Quintin demanded that all the inhabitants of the country should be compelled to embrace the Roman Catholic religion—that no heretic should be allowed to marry, or to carry on any mercantile engagements. This diabolical proposition he supported by scripture arguments. Seventy thousand unfortunates were butchered by the Catholics in France in the course of one week. The massacre of St. Bartholomew will be an everlasting stain on the French nation and their religion. This barbarous proceeding was approved by the holy church, and a solemn thanksgiving was offered up in all the churches by the command of its high and bloody dignitaries. A fixed, or habitual hatred is scarcely human—it is fiendish, and the transition from the law of reason to the law of arms is most unnatural—and yet it is frequently practised. There are too many hot-headed men, who rush pell-mell into every contest,

'Fire-eyed disputants, who deem their swords
On points of faith, more eloquent than words.'

The men who engage in religious wars are generally the most ignorant of the history, nature, and influence of the question under dispute. Bigotry, persecution, and a spirit of coercion, have not been confined to the Popish church, as some would fain make us believe; but we appeal with confidence to history, and say, the Protestants were as bigoted in their persecution, as barbarous and bloodthirsty, as the Roman church. John Knox condemned the worship of images:—'Idolatry ought not only to be suppressed by the idolators; but ought to die the death.' Schultz, a minister of the Lutheran church, maintained that the opinion of the Calvinist, with regard to the eucharist, was the very sink of heresy, and the utmost of Satan's rage; and that no one would maintain this who was not a sworn enemy of God, and who did not merit death and eternal damnation. Musculus, who lived in the sixteenth century, declared that all who taught that Jesus Christ died only in his human nature, belonged to the devil, both body and soul. The creed usually attributed to St. Athanasius, is a specimen of absurdity, bigotry, and prejudice. *All* men are therein bound to believe what *no* man

can understand, and the everlasting happiness of every one is made dependent on subtile distinctions and definitions, which the writer himself could not comprehend. Calvin persecuted the eminent Servetus to death; Luther persecuted Munster, and all the early reformers called by modern Protestants, pious men, are reeking with the blood of the unfortunates destroyed by them, for crimes which never were perpetrated, and motives which never existed. An innocent doctrine in itself is, by many a bigoted Christian's fancy, distorted, and believe that it is only capable of leading the soul to perdition, and they inflict (when they have the opportunity and power) 'salutary chastenings,' as they are willing to think them. They persecute the body for the salvation of the soul; but they never choose this kind of 'salutary chastening' for themselves, although they may be as defective as other people. It may be said, perhaps, these persons are stimulated by zeal; they *think* they act rightly by interfering with their neighbours; but the others fancy themselves correct, and think that these officious persons should attend to themselves. Let all parties become quiet and harmonious—let them put in practice (instead of uncharitableness and cruelty) the great principles of truth, which can alone contribute to the happiness and felicity of this life.

'O shame to men! devil with devil damn'd,
Firm concord holds; men only disagree
Of creatures rational.'

Bigotry carries a man to extremes; he forsakes not only apparent evil, but actual good. Calvin and others would give no man credit for sincerity, who would not destroy the whole of that which had a Popish tendency. At the Reformation there was a general destruction of temples, Mosaic work, embroidery, statues, and paintings. Knox, and all the principal reformers, encouraged these Vandalisms and barbarous proceedings; they declared that the best way to prevent the rooks from returning was to destroy their nests. Piety, and misguided zeal, I know, these proceedings have been called by some; but as the art of guiding and regulating religious feelings, is not as yet discovered, I have no other alternative but to call it bigotry, if nothing worse.

When persecution takes the garb of piety, she appears to religionists of all denominations, more holy; but she is more bitter and fiendish. She claims a liberty of doing more than if she were not so inconsistently clothed; and the professors of Christianity more than any other sect. The Moslem law enjoins persecution; but the believers in the Al-Koran seldom indulge in it. 'In Persia,' says Pietro delle Valle, 'by a peculiar and very ancient privilege, liberty of opinion is allowed to all, each following the religion his conscience dictates, and living as he pleases under the protection of the law.' The Christian dispensation, on the other hand, as the Christians say, forbids persecution; but the professed disciples of Christ have practised it in almost every age. From whom have you got the right, I ask you, you bigoted fanatics, to raise your hands against your brother, in a matter which concerns the unknown? When licentious principles are promulgated, subversive of good order and human happiness, the welfare of the state requires that they should be checked. But it is sometimes questionable what may be deemed licentious, and then there may be a difference of opinion as to the best mode of counteracting it. However, it may be taken as a principle, that fair means and the influence of reason, will be more effective, than foul means and coercion.

Quarrels of all kinds have arisen among boisterous bigots. There have been battles of books, of pamphlets, octavos, quartos, folios, and manuscripts, in which much ink has been shed, and much time and paper wasted. A good system has been designated by disgraceful terms, merely because it was an opposing system. Every man deems his own opinions orthodox, and those of others heterodox. An Act of Parliament was passed in Scotland in the beginning of the sixteenth century. for the purpose of prohibiting the introduction of Luther's works, which were termed in the act 'The Sink of all Filth and Vice.' Bigots sometimes condemn an objectionable practice severely, because they may allow themselves in something which is equally bad; and sometimes people will object to trifles which are allowable, because they may tranquillise their own minds with regard to actual vices. How many hypocrites, ill-tempered persons, and secret sinners, being unquiet themselves, will cry out against a trifling indulgence in dress, and a praiseworthy cheerfulness? Clothing is used for ornament and comfort, but such people object to the former, so that by this rule a woollen rag would be sufficient for a man.

Cheerfulness, and not levity, is generally the result of a good conscience, and a person who does not possess it must be disordered in his body, or his mind. Some men will live strictly, merely because they may have an opportunity of condemning others. So sweet is the indulgence of a censorious spirit! But it is worse to gratify an uncharitable feeling than to allow innocent practices.

There have been wars of religion, the dominion of 'peace and good-will' has been endeavoured to be founded on mangled corpses, and ground besmeared with blood!

The cruelties that have been practised in all ages on poor humanity, were said to be demanded by piety and morality. The Papists pretended that their bloody persecutions were countenanced by the law of their God, and the establishment of the horrid Inquisition was necessary for the pure and benevolent influence of Christianity. The Protestants, when they had the power, were as harsh and bigoted as the Catholics, and, for cold-blooded barbarities, were never surpassed. They tell you that the genius of Protestantism is free, and that of Popery is restrictive and persecuting; but for all their professed freedom, the number of Papists persecuted to death in the reign of Good Queen Bess, far surpass those of the reign of Queen Mary.

If a man be bigoted and harsh, let him, in a spirit of charity, be deemed ignorant; and if narrowness of mind be not the cause, it must be owing to something worse. Some men are naturally perverse and obstinate; firmness is praiseworthy. Demosthenes said, 'The beginning of virtue is consultation and deliberation; the perfection of it, constancy.' Sometimes a man may have examined doubtful questions with diligence, and a conscientious desire to discover truth; but the subject being obscure, he has not succeeded; he may, therefore, remain in a comparative indecision, and may lay them aside for the time being. He who only examines one side of a question, and gives his judgment, gives it improperly, though he may be on the right side. But he who examines both sides, and, after examination gives his assent to neither, may surely be pardoned this suspension of judgment, for it is safer to continue in doubt than to decide amiss. But obstinacy, which is often confounded with decision and firmness, is a continuing in a certain course, without a capability of assigning a reason for it, except, 'I will, because I will,' and then

——'Once wedded fast
To some dear falsehood, hugs it to the last.'

Cicero exhibited a specimen of prejudice when he declared, he would rather err with Plato than be right with others. Prejudice generally arises from an ignorance of what may be said in support of another opinion. Thus, persecutors have been the most unacquainted with what they have condemned, and it is somewhere wisely observed, that the most unreasonable prejudices of men are generally the strongest. There is a specimen of sapient logic in the 'Twelfth Night,' which very much resembles the method persued by these self-satisfied persons:—'That that is, is; so I being Master Parson, am Master Parson; for what is that, but that; and is, but is?'

There is proof enough that prejudiced men have not been the most virtuous, nor have they been the most consistent in their opposition to others. It is said of the company of Fathers that examined the works of Abelard, for the purpose of condemning them, that while some one read those masterly writings, they were all devotedly engaged in elating themselves *spiritually* from the bottle, until, having reached the zenith of inspiration, they sunk into drunken stupidity. But previously to the consummation of intoxication, they stamped, jeered, and laughed; and when they heard anything new, they demanded that the author should not be suffered to live. At last they answered the reader only with half phrases and half words, and then fell either asleep, or under the table.

Good men are imperfect; consequently, there may be found in the black list of persecutors, men that ought to have known better. Sir Thomas More was a bitter opponent of Protestants; and who would have thought that Sherlock was a persecutor? But, however improbable it may seem, he recommended the imprisonment of Baxter.

Uniformity of opinion is impossible; if men would generally allow the truth of this assertion, and if they would act rationally, we should never hear of any endeavours to make all men of the same mind. Constantine endeavoured to accomplish this foolish project, and so did Charles V.; but these, with all such visionaries, have failed. Charles V., in

his retirement at St. Justus, constructed clocks, and endeavoured to keep them all alike, but he could not succeed; and thus he had a practical illustration of his former folly. If there are not two objects in the animal, vegetable, or mineral kingdoms, which are the counterparts of each other; no two rivulets, rivers, seas, or mountains that are exactly alike, why should we imagine that there either are, or may be, minds which shall harmonise in opinion, inclination, and action?

We may agree with regard to the general character of some particular facts; for instance, we believe that the sun has risen and will rise; but if the opinions of men be collected respecting the age of this luminary, its origin, its nature, and its continuance, we shall soon discover that a great variation exists.

Bigotry frequently runs into credulity; the same influence which will prevent a man from going on as far as the boundaries of reason will allow on some occasions, will carry him farther on others. A person of this kind will not only disbelieve more than he ought, but he will become credulous. A Hindoo writer has said, 'He that obstinately adheres to any set of opinions, may bring himself to believe that the freshest sandal wood is a flame of fire.' Huet (in an account of a journey to Stockholm) has a proof that nothing may be to absurd too be believed: 'The burghers of Hardenburgh, elect a burgomaster in this manner:—On the day of election, having been at church, received the blessings of the priest, after long prayer and genuflexions, they adjourn to the vestry, and fix themselves around a table, and place their chins upon it, which are ornamented with long beards; then a little animal, which we will not name for fear of offending polite ears, but by whose instrumentality the God of the Israelites afflicted the unfortunate Egyptians, and which are called in Hebrew, Kinnim, is put on the table. As soon as the little animal has recovered from the agitation which its rough usage has occasioned, it begins to travel, and crawls towards one of the beards, and wherever it fixes itself, the owner of the lucky beard is chosen for the office.' Men who are incredulous in common matters, have brought themselves to believe in holy and unholy ghosts, in witchcrafts, imps, devils, &c.; that there are nations on the globe without heads, others without necks, others with tails; some with only one eye; some with the face situated in the breast, and giants of incredible stature. Liberality will preserve a person from many erroneous notions, and from many improper actions; it will enable him to give that credit which is due; whereas bigotry brings into operation all the worst passions of human nature. There is scarcely anything more contributive to happiness, to a free, calm, and pleasant condition of the mind, than liberality; and scarcely anything more productive of misery, of credulity, and discord, than that plague-spot of human progress, bigotry. SAMUEL WOLFF.

ADDRESS TO THE SOLDIERS OF SECULARISM.

CHAPTER I.

COMRADES.—Believe me, I am neither actuated by vanity nor pride, in thus addressing you. For years I have been a cheerful combatant in the ranks of Secularism, and I have derived so much satisfaction from my activity, that I am in duty bound, not only to endeavour to enlist recruits, but also to excite to increased exertion, the scattered forces of Secularism. How powerful are our principles, and how limited the means for promulgating them! Shall we, in this age of publicity, sit calmly down and allow our conquering creed to slumber in oblivion? Opportunities for propagandism are continually springing up around us. The Christians, while deploring the daily desertions from their camp, and the doubtful position of many that remain, become blind to the consequences of controversy, and recklessly rush into the arena of debate, where the disciplined Secularist, by courtesy and capability, soon enforces a capitulation.

I can hardly suppose it possible for a Secularist to remain a passive spectator of the direful effects of Christianity, which everywhere surround him. Protest, he will! Discuss, he must! Tell me not that the true Secularist sees danger in the boldest avowal of his creed. It is the glory of Secularism, that so far from seeking obscurity, it courts investigation; for no faith can be desirable of which the possessor is ashamed. The brave soldier never shrinks from danger, if an object is to be attained, and our warfare is so encouraging and satisfactory, that if conducted truthfully and heartily, we can often convert a powerful opponent into a faithful friend. Every Secularist should,

himself, be the centre of a propaganda, and 'where two or three are gathered together,' with a determination to spread their principles, a powerful combination can soon be formed. There is amongst us, a distaste for mere formal organisation; but let some determined and discreet advocate avow himself, and he is soon surrounded by sympathising friends.

Brethren, be up and doing! Let us redouble our efforts in the year before us; do not be satisfied with that sickly Secularism which rests contented with what has been already won. Our duty consists not in being perpetually on the defensive, but in repeated and untiring attacks on the serried ranks of superstition. The victories of Paine, Carlile, and Holyoake, will be fruitless, unless followed up by courageous and continuous effort.

'Begin! be bold, and venture to be wise.
He who defers this work from day to day,
Does on a river's bank expecting stay
Till the whole stream that stopp'd him shall be gone,
Which runs, and as it runs, for ever shall run on.'

J. P. Adams.

THE WISE MEN OF THE EAST.

Lately the Rev. Mr. Bonwell, the incumbent of St. Philip's District Church, Stepney, at the back of the London Hospital, made an application to Mr. Ingham respecting a vile nuisance which has been for some time in existence at the corner of Philpot Street, Commercial Road East, and which has been repeatedly made the subject of complaint to the police.—The Rev. Mr. Bonwell said: I beg leave to submit to you a case which I think is one calling for the interference of a magistrate; and I call your attention to it as the guardian of public morals, order, and decency, in this district. There exists in my parish a place called the Commercial Lecture Hall, which has been opened for a long time, and in which lectures are given and discussions have taken place among persons calling themselves atheists, pantheists, and deists, to which all classes have been and still are invited. I do not complain, sir, of persons holding peculiar opinions, and it is far from my wish that people should be prosecuted for their opinions, if they are not repugnant to good order, morality, and decency; but what I complain of is the blasphemous and horrible language which, I am informed, has been uttered in the hall on the Sabbath and other days of the week, and the offensive placards daily posted outside the place. The language of those placards is calculated to give great offence to persons of all denominations of Christians, and it does happen that Philpot Street leads direct from the Commercial Road to [*my*] church, which is within a few yards of the north end of the street. The Scotch church, and a large dissenting chapel, are situated in Philpot Street, and the placards exhibited outside the hall must shock the feelings of Christian people very much. My parishioners have complained of these blasphemous productions, which have given them much pain, and outraged their feelings. I have a copy of one of those placards, exhibited on Saturday last by the Secularists opposite the Lecture Hall. The reverend gentleman, who was deeply affected, and was listened to with breathless attention by a crowded court, consisting principally of shipowners, merchants, and people connected with the docks, then read as follows:—

'Lecture Hall, Commercial Road.

'mormon hymn.

'The God that others worship
Is not the God for me;
He has no parts nor passions,
He cannot hear nor see.
But I've a God who lives above,
A God of power and love,
The God of Revelation;
And that's the God for me.'

The Rev. Mr. Bonwell went on to state that the above lines were followed by a picture, the upper part of which represented God Almighty, the lower the Virgin and Child, from Murillo's celebrated picture of the Holy Family. On one side of the picture were the following words, in large capitals: 'These are the Mormon and Christian deities.' On the other side of the picture were these words, in large capitals: 'Jehovah, the God of the Bible, has the form of a man.' The placard then went on to say: 'Mr. Maccall, the great pantheistic orator, will on Sunday evening, December 9, deliver a most interesting lecture on the "Evidences of Mormonism." Mr. Maccall will reply to the saints and elders, after the lecture, which commences at seven. Miserable sinners go to church and chapel, and the Lord have mercy upon them. Let honest working-men attend the hall this morning, and hear Mr. Adams's celebrated his-

tory of all the news of the week—in the palace, the cabinet, the church and chapel, the police-courts, the Crimea, &c. Commence at eleven.' As I was on my way to this court this afternoon (continued the rev. gentleman) I copied another offensive placard, which is as follows:—'East London Secular Society, Commercial Hall, Philpot Street, Commercial Road.—Important theological discussion this evening between Christians and Atheists. Members of religion, Sunday-school teachers, and all who can instruct, are invited to take part in the debates, which are conducted with courtesy, and listened to with attention. Chair to be taken at eight o'clock.—Holyoake, Tyndall, and Co., printers and engravers, 3, Queen's Head Passage, Paternoster Row.'—A few days since I was passing the lecture-hall, when a boy standing opposite to it pointed to me, and called out derisively, 'There goes a man that believes in the Holy Ghost;' and on making inquiries, I learnt that a discussion had taken place in the hall on the Trinity, at which the boy was present, and that in the course of the lecture most offensive and blasphemous expressions were used relating to the Holy Ghost.—Mr. Ingham: I am sorry that you should have been so grossly insulted in the public streets.—The Rev. Mr. Bonwell: I think the feelings of people have been very much outraged by the exhibition of placards containing such offensive terms. I do not wish to prosecute opinion, but I think the religious feelings and opinions of the Christian public should be respected.—Mr. Ingham: Most certainly, sir.—The Rev. Mr. Bonwell: I know that many persons have expressed themselves in very indignant terms about those placards, and their constant exhibition may lead to a breach of the peace, which I should greatly deplore. Can, sir, the public exhibition of these offensive placards be put down?—Mr. Ingham thought it was somewhat difficult to do so. If the bills contained libellous or blasphemous matter, the printers, as well as those who exhibited them, could be indicted; and if convicted, would be liable to fine or imprisonment, or both. All opinions were tolerated in this country which were not contrary to good morals or public decency; but libels and blasphemy were not tolerated, and could be put down. He could not act summarily in this matter, and direct the removal of the obnoxious placards. An unlawful and seditious assembly might be put down, and the parties dispersed, and they might also be indicted. The repression of the evil laid before him by the Rev. Mr. Bonwell was attended with some difficulty, and he would advise the rev. gentleman to be very careful in any steps he might take, and not allow the parties of whom he complained to obtain a triumph. England was a country of tolerance, and great scope was given to freedom of opinions, if not given in an indecent and unbecoming manner, or calculated to disturb the public peace.—The Rev. Mr. Bonwell: Here are the papers, sir, and I would respectfully submit that they are highly offensive to the religious feelings of the great mass of the community, and calculated to lead to disturbances.—Mr. Ingham: It is very difficult to draw a line, and say what is proper and what is improper. I can but deeply regret the exhibition of such placards. In any steps you may be advised to take, I would recommend you to act with the greatest caution. Every rightly-constituted mind must appreciate your motives in coming forward, and the way in which you have addressed yourself to me in this painful matter, in which I cannot interfere.—The Rev. Mr. Bonwell thanked the magistrate for his attention, and retired.

Numerous applications have been made to the police of the K division, and the inspectors at the Stepney station-house, to remove the blasphemous and indecent placards exhibited outside the 'Lecture Hall.' A few Sundays ago, as Inspector Smith, of the K division, was passing the lecture-hall, he was requested by many respectable persons to remove an indecent placard exhibited outside the hall. The inspector said he had no legal power to do so, but if he saw anybody tear it down he should not take them into custody. The printed placard did not retain its place more than a few minutes after this intimation was given.

[Mr. Bonwell needs a hint. We will give him a twofold one. It would be wise in him to remember that others as well as himself, have power; and that the press is open to exposures of *clerical humbug and wickedness.* In any controversy with *Mr. Bonwell* we would recommend his opponents to go the *Times.*]

Eusebius, the ecclesiastical historian, speaking of the Patriarchs, says:—'They cared not for corporal circumcision; no more do we; nor for the observations of Sabbaths; no more do we.'—*Eccl. Hist.*

OUR PUBLIC TEACHERS.

LINENDRAPERS are not the only traders who make 'awful sacrifices.' In the case of Strahan, Paul, and Bates we had the rising working man Bates, the baronet and the peer. The peerage, in fact, always distinguished in *causes célèbres*, is becoming very familiar with the dark side of the Court of Bankruptcy; and in a case reported to-day we find the peerage and the Church dallying with the Criminal Court. The Rev. William O. Beresford was convicted at York of having obtained cash upon a bill of exchange for £100, with the forged endorsement of Mr. John Cunliffe Kay.

The reverend gentleman is cousin to Lord Decies; but this bill of exchange was not his first lapse. It is stated that he had a living in Cork worth £1,000 a year, which had been sequestered for his debts. It is a worse case than that of the London clergyman, lately, who was found taking double parish fees; or the clergyman at Preston, accused of taking subscriptions for a closed chapel. Our weekly contemporary, the *Examiner*, notices the large proportion of clergymen who figure in police returns as drunk and disorderly. No part of the clergy can have fallen into this degraded state suddenly.—*Globe*, Dec. 13, 1855.

Review of Books.

'THE London City Mission Magazine,' for December, 1855. Seeleys.—The *City Mission Magazine*, for December, is very interesting from the information it contains in reference to the population of St. Giles's. We think this Mission open to some objections. It is possible that many of the missionaries are sincere, devoted, and good men, but we fear there are some grave exceptions to this remark. It is easy to understand that men possessing. as they think, the invaluable privileges of Christianity should, in the kindness of their hearts, desire to extend the knowledge of those privileges to all around them; and, in the absence of a popular inquiry into the principles and character of Christ, send the information to the people. But how a man, or body of men, can be justified in forcing a way into the houses of the poor, simply because they are poor, passes our ingenuity to discover. If it be necessary to invade the *poor* in their dirt and misery, how do the missionaries escape from the necessity of intruding upon *the middle and higher classes?* Perhaps they remember what Christ said about the rich man and the camel, and so spare themselves the useless labour. How any generous man can insist upon discovering filth and vice, such as is exhibited in the report before us, and not insist upon being allowed at once to remove it, may perhaps be discovered 'when the secrets of all hearts are disclosed;' that being the time when these missionaries expect to reap the full reward, and see the full result of their labours. What does this mean? 'The arm of the parish running north and south, includes Bedford Square, Gower Street, and places of a like description, and there is no population *sufficiently poor to be visited.*' Does not this look as if the Mission feared to come into contact with any but the most ignorant?

The following extracts will be interesting to many of our readers. The remarks upon 'Infidels' deserve careful perusal, and the evidence of good service by the missionaries in the reclamation of drunkards to temperance, calls for our highest praise. If the missionaries would increase their efforts to teach *Secular* truth, they would do infinitely more good than at present.

St Giles's.—'The London City Mission has nine missionaries there, and a tenth, who had been removed for want of funds from one of its districts, is about to be appointed to another of its districts. The Scripture-readers' Association has also five Scripture-readers, and the Church Pastoral-Aid Society has one lay assistant, in addition to a curate. There is, moreover, a missionary, unconnected with any of the societies, supported by the congregation of Bloomsbury Chapel, under the superintendence of the Rev. W. Brock. Both that chapel and Bedford Chapel, although situated in St. George's parish, make St. Giles's their sphere of action in benevolent efforts for the poor. There are, consequently, seventeen paid lay-agents in this southern part of St. Giles's. But, in estimating the fruit of this agency, it must be borne in mind, that almost the entire of it has been newly appointed, and that little time has been yet afforded for large results. The entire parish is now visited, the Scripture-readers all occupying distinct districts to the city missionaries, and the two meeting together periodically for prayer and conference.'

St. Giles's Church District.—'Mr.——,

No.—, —— street, an atheist, attended the majority of our open-air meetings, and, in consequence, was induced to attend the Rev. R. Bickersteth's Monday evening lecture. His conduct during my last visit was much improved, his conversation being entirely free from the blasphemies he formerly indulged in.

'Others also have been induced to attend our meeting on the Sunday evenings in consequence of the open-air services.

'When we held our last meeting, and stated we should discontinue the meetings for the season, several expressed their regret, and among others was an avowed infidel.

'Nearly two-thirds of the poverty, misery, crime, and disease which have come under my notice, is produced by habits of intemperance. In every house, nay, more, in almost every room, some footprints of that fearful monster may be clearly traced. Seeing the enormity of this evil I have been induced during the last nine months, to become a total abstainer, with the earnest hope that, by God's assistance, I may be the better prepared by a living example to induce others to follow in my steps. My humble effort has not been fruitless, inasmuch as no less than ten confirmed drunkards have been induced to abandon their evil course, some of whom are constant attendants at my Sunday night meetings; and who can doubt but their attendance upon a means of grace will, under the blessing of God, prove a blessing not only to themselves, but also to their families and the district in which they live?

'A very vigorous missionary has just left this district, for labour in another department of Christian enterprise. His place has, however, been already supplied. He had been a little more than two years at work in the district, and on leaving he thus enumerates his labours:—

'"Since the commencement of my endeavours here, I have spent 3,310 hours in domiciliary visitation, and made 9,447 visits, 1,291 of which were to the beds of the sick and dying. During these visits I have read the Word of God 5.021 times, and have held 125 meetings for the exposition of the Word of God and prayer. 17,547 religious tracts have been distributed by me, besides large quantities of the 'Band of Hope,' and other publications. 45 copies of Holy Writ have been carefully distributed amongst Papists, and others who were anxious to obtain, and unable to purchase them."

'Boys, destitute and criminal, have been introduced to asylums, and fallen females restored to honourable positions in society.

'Of infidelity, the missionary writes:—"This has increased since I began my labours here; not, however, by the perversion of any formerly professing to believe in the inspiration of the Scriptures, but by the addition from without of several infidels who have recently come on the district. I am credibly informed by working men generally, that infidelity exists to an alarming extent wherever men are congregated together in workshops and factories; and that this is especially the case with shoemakers and tailors. I am also informed that there are 48 places in London alone, where infidelity, under various names and forms, is systematically taught in lectures made purposely interesting, and calculated, whilst they improve the intellect, to deprave the heart. I have also observed, invariably, that a strong political bias appears to be intimately associated with the infidelity professed among working men, whether as a cause or an effect it is difficult to determine, and that this bias is strongly against the existing form of government, bitterly opposed to the established church, and decidedly revolutionary. Notwithstanding this, however, my reception among them is invariably friendly. I know nothing of politics, seldom, if ever, see a newspaper, and therefore profess to be, as I really am, quite incompetent, as well as most unwilling, to enter into any political discussion with them."'

'The Baptist Magazine' for December. Houlston and Stoneman.—'That willing servant of Christ's churches and ministers,' the Editor of this Magazine, seems to think he has nothing to do but to give his friends plenty of paper—and he charges a high price for it. This book is very dear at a shilling. The only wonder is, that anybody buys it. It must be for the sake of the ministers' widows, who are benefited by the profits, that the concern is kept afloat. There is, however, one great thing *pretended* to be done. Truth is established first, and then recovered by 'Mr. John Freeman.'—This grand result of *free*thought should not be hidden in the pages of the *Baptist Magazine*, but should be spread all over the mass of mankind. Mr. Freeman's article turns out, after all, to be a mere attempt to reconcile some contradictory passages in the Bible. This mountain in labour has

brought forth only a mouse. His common sense, however, is better than his bibliology. He says, in conclusion, 'To aim at what is impracticable, or at what is at variance with other duties, is criminal folly; but to "do whatever our hand findeth to do" is our proper course.' Is it, Mr. Freeman? Then, in the name of goodness, why do *you* not set yourself to the performance of your manifest duties; and instead of additionally mystifying the people about what does not concern them in the least, help them to do their duties in the realisation of the various means of happiness. There is also a reproduction of part of John H. Verschuir's oration 'On the Evils arising from a perverse imitation of the Old Economy in Christian City or Church.' This is only an indirect kick at Rome, and is a repetition of arguments, used long ago upon a decided question. Most of our friends will be aware, that near Bristol resides one George Müller, a man of faith. By means of enormous effrontery, the religious public is made to believe that praying George supports an immense establishment solely by the power of prayer. This is easily believed. Money pours upon the lucky saint by thousands. Perhaps it would be as well, if Government had the power to inquire how this sanctimonious fellow spends all the money he gets. He is, and seems likely to continue, irresponsible. The *Baptist Magazine* says, 'But whence come the funds? This is the mystery. Mr. Müller is not a man of property. It is declared that he never incurs any debt, and never issues orders for any goods without having in hand the means to pay for them. His own account is that when money is needed, he prays for it, and that sooner or later, but always in time, it comes. How to understand this, we know not. Mr. Müller ascribes it to faith. We do not see the basis for the persuasion, and, therefore, though it may be faith in him, the same thing would be presumption in others. All goes well, apparently, under Mr. Müller's management; but in other cases similar to the human eye, hope has proved deceptive. Where usefulness and honour were anticipated, trouble and disgrace have ensued.' These remarks are very extraordinary, coming from a religious paper, whose writers of course believe that 'whatsoever they ask in faith, they shall receive.' The *Baptist Magazine* does not believe in a heavenly bank, any more than we do. Then they are no longer Christians. Why not say so at once, and come and help *us?* One word more about praying George. The sooner his pretences are exposed, the better. We should expect to hear of the flight of the 'reverend' managers of any concern, where no supervision is exercised on the part of subscribers? Another reviewer says, 'we are not convinced that every word of the sacred scriptures is immediately inspired by God.' Then who shall draw the line between the inspired and the uninspired. The *Baptist Magazine* repudiates the power of prayer as enforced by Christ, and the divine inspiration of the Bible. Where is its Christianity? G. P. G.

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